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TAGS: PREL PINR KU

SUBJECT: SHAYKH JABER RECEIVES AMBASSADOR,S CREDENTIALS

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron. Reasons 1.4 (b, d).

11. (C) In a quick, well-choreographed October 12 ceremony, the Ambassador presented his credentials to Shaykh Jaber at the Amiri Diwan. The Ambassadors from Japan, Azerbaijan, and Canada presented credentials in succession before the Amir received the Ambassador and the six senior members of the U.S. Mission. After presentation of the letters and introduction of mission staff to the Amir, the three-minute conversation over coffee with the Amir was somewhat perfunctory, with the Amir offering, in almost a whisper, a warm welcome and commenting that there could be no better relations than those between Kuwait and the United States. The Ambassador pledged to do whatever possible to improve already strong ties with Kuwait, mentioning work towards a free trade agreement, and a deeper dialogue on security and terrorism. The Ambassador ended the meeting, on cue from the protocol officer, by expressing his early best wishes for Ramadan. Among the attendees on the Kuwaiti side were Minister for the Amiri Diwan Shaykh Nasser and Foreign Minister Shaykh Mohamed.

12. (S/NF) HEALTH OBSERVATIONS: We were told by officials around the Amir that he is strongest early in the morning and then tires quickly. (The four credentials ceremonies started at 8 am and were over by 9:15.) At the meeting today, the Amir's gaze was steady, but his overall physical weakness was obvious. However, he stood to receive the Ambassador and the Embassy staff, and there was no evidence of the trembling that accompanies Parkinson's. He looked stronger to the DCM than he had at the airport upon his recent return from New York and Geneva, and one of the protocol officers opined in the same vein that the Amir looked better than he had in another recent appearance.

LeBaron